

# **Natick 360**

## **Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.**



## **Town of Natick Strategic Plan 2008-2012**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Overview**

*Natick 360* is the Town of Natick's strategic planning process. It is sponsored by five of the Town's boards and committees: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board and School Committee. *Natick 360* was authorized by Town Meeting in spring 2006. The strategic planning process underwent four phases:

- ***Phase 1. Our Community Yesterday and Today:*** The Metropolitan Area Planning Council researched and published a study of Natick, its history, its characteristics, strategic advantages and disadvantages, and resources.
- ***Phase 2. Our Shared Values and Vision:*** Based on a summary of citizen input at the October 2006 "Vision for the Future" meeting of Natick residents, the five sponsoring boards and committees developed and adopted a set of values that are widely shared throughout the community, and statements describing a shared vision of the Town's aspirations.
- ***Phase 3. Our Strategic Options:*** In a series of joint meetings among members of the five sponsoring boards and committees; a gathering of members of the public; a meeting of "key informants," who are leaders in government, not-for-profit and business sectors throughout the region, potential solutions to key issues facing the Town were identified. The Town staff helped identify cost categories for these strategic options.
- ***Phase 4. Our Strategic Choices:*** In the June 2007 "Strategic Choice" meeting, citizens narrowed and prioritized the list of options. A scientific random sample survey solicited residents' opinions. The sponsoring boards and committees narrowed the list further, added their own input, and developed 12 goal statements focusing on the results they want the Town to achieve. Each board and committee then identified actions it could take that would advance the 12 goals.

The five sponsoring boards and committees considered five primary sources in developing the strategic goals for 2008-2012:

- ***Our Community Yesterday and Today,*** the report of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on Natick characteristics;
- ***Natick Value and Vision Statements,*** developed through the "Vision for the Future" meetings October 27-29, 2006, and workshops for members of the sponsoring boards and committees;
- ***The results of the "Strategic Choices" workshops*** held June 8-10, 2007, and facilitated meetings of the sponsoring boards and committees;
- ***The results of the scientific random sample survey of Natick residents,*** conducted in July and early August 2007 by independent survey firm ETC Institute of Olathe, Kansas; and,
- ***The priorities and suggested action items*** of the individual sponsoring boards and committees.

## **Natick Value and Vision Statements**

### **As citizens of Natick, we value:**

- Natick's "small-town" sense as a safe, interconnected community fed by its heritage, pride and spirit of volunteerism, and by its diversity, derived from its tradition of affordability and welcoming nature;
- Natick's stewardship of its diverse open spaces, and natural resources;
- A high-value education for students at all levels and abilities, and continuing educational opportunities for all Natick citizens;
- A variety of businesses that create a wide range of jobs and provide support to the community in many ways;
- Natick Center, a vibrant focal point of our community;
- Natick's abundance of cultural, recreational and educational facilities, wide array of municipal services, and proximity to major transit and transportation resources that contribute to our high quality of life.

### **As citizens of Natick, we aspire to create a future in which:**

- Natick is a healthy community of diverse and interconnected citizens, businesses, organizations and neighborhoods, where citizens of all ages, backgrounds and income levels can live, work and thrive;
- Natick's natural resources are preserved and accessible to the community;
- Natick Center is the vibrant core of the community, a unique and accessible destination for commerce, community and culture, day and night;
- Natick's public schools and programs are recognized as among the best;
- Natick's self-government, supported by informed and engaged citizens, is fiscally sound, delivers services efficiently and communicates effectively with the public;
- Natick's public infrastructure and buildings fulfill their function efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of the community, and are maintained in good working order;
- Natick is a desirable and accessible destination that marshals local and regional partners and resources to solve problems and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens.

## **Natick's Strategic Goals**

- Assure short-term and long-term financial stability of the Town in order to sustain the services required and desired by the community.
- Ensure that people are well-informed about what the Town is doing, so that people vote and participate in Town boards and committees.
- Maintain public safety commensurate with growth and change.
- Proactively plan for new development appropriate for neighborhoods and the community.
- Improve educational quality, opportunities and outcomes for each student, regardless of age and ability.
- Develop and implement a plan for extraordinary capital projects.
- Develop a comprehensive system for maintaining and improving public facilities, infrastructure, and ordinary capital requirements.
- Improve traffic flows and minimize the impact of traffic on the Town.
- Encourage Natick's transition to an environmentally sustainable community.
- Attract and retain businesses providing high-quality jobs.
- Promote, foster and enable an economically, socially and culturally vibrant and diverse Natick Center.
- Address the intellectual, physical and social needs of all Natick residents.

## More Information

The complete *Natick 360* Strategic Plan is available on the Town of Natick website at [www.natickma.gov](http://www.natickma.gov). The complete plan lists almost 200 action items that have been identified by the Sponsoring Boards to move toward achieving the Strategic Goals. Copies of the complete plan are also available at the Morse Institute Library, the Bacon Free Library, the Community Development Office, Town Clerk's Office, and the Kennedy Senior Center.

## Volunteers

Dozens of Natick residents volunteered to help with the various logistics for developing the *Natick 360 Strategic Plan 2008-2012*. These dedicated volunteers are too numerous to list here, but the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee thanks them for their selfless service to our community.

## Strategic Planning Process Participants

Over ten percent of Natick's households, nearly 2,000 people, participated directly in this strategic planning process:

- In July 2006, three preliminary focus groups sought input from 21 residents.
- Three business forums, in September and December 2006 and April 2007, brought 20 Natick business leaders into the process.
- The Town's 18 senior staff provided input to the process in two meetings in October 2006 and February 2007.
- More than 150 residents attended the October 2006 Values and Vision Weekend Friday evening event, featuring presentations on Natick's past and present and the "new urbanism" movement.
- More than 325 participated in the October 2006 Values and Vision Workshops on Saturday and Sunday.
- Another nearly 200 people provided written input to the October 2006 Values and Vision Workshops through the *Natick 360* web site.
- About 40 residents overcame February 2007 snows to provide input at public meetings at the Morse Institute Library and the Senior Center.
- More than 30 state and regional leaders attended the Key Informant meeting in February 2007.
- A forum at Natick High School involved 90 Junior and Senior students in March 2007.
- More than 100 Natick photographers submitted works for the "Focus on Natick" contest. Selected photographs were displayed at The Center for the Arts in Natick during May and June 2007.
- More than 100 residents came to the June 2007 Strategic Choices Weekend Friday evening event featuring presentations about State and regional planning activities.
- More than 140 residents participated directly in the July 2007 Strategic Choices Workshops on Saturday and Sunday, and several more provided written input.
- Nearly 1,200 households responded to the July-August 2007 scientific random sample survey.
- The 42 members of the five sponsoring boards and committees met several times to consider *Natick 360* issues in both joint sessions and board and committee meetings over the 1½ years of the initiative. They include the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Board and School Committee.

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee thanks all the participants for their commitment to making our community a better place to live, work and thrive.

## Private Sector Financial Sponsors

The Town of Natick and the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee would like to thank the following businesses for their financial support of the *Natick 360* strategic planning process. Without their support, the *Natick 360 Strategic Plan 2008-2012* would not have been possible.

- Ameriprise Financial
- Belkin Family Lookout Farm
- Boston Scientific
- Debsan, My Decorating Store
- Eastern Bank
- Fair & Yeager Insurance Agency, Inc.
- MetroWest Subaru
- Metrowest Medical Center
- Middlesex Savings Bank
- Natick Federal Savings Bank
- Scrub-a-Dub Car Wash
- SustainServ
- WebReply, Inc.

In addition, the Town of Natick and the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee would like to thank the following businesses for providing refreshments for events that were part of the *Natick 360* strategic planning process, and for developing the [www.Natick360.org](http://www.Natick360.org) public web site.

- Bacon Street Farm
- Bakery on the Common
- BJ's Wholesale Club
- Entenmann's Outlet Store
- Natick Pizza
- Pizza Peddler
- George's Pizza
- Liberty Pizza
- Roche Brothers
- Starbucks
- Stop & Shop
- Thread Media, Inc.

## Strategic Planning Oversight Committee

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee was charged with managing the planning process, recommending professional consultants and overseeing their work on the project, engaging the public to participate in the process, and coordinating involvement by the sponsoring boards.

- Rosemary Driscoll
- Teresa Evans
- Matthew Gardner, Ph.D.
- John Heerwagen
- Bill Mayhew
- David Parish, Co-Chair
- George Richards
- Andres Rochwerger
- Craig Ross, Co-Chair
- Harlee S. Strauss, Ph.D.

## Consulting Partners

### Metropolitan Area Planning Council

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, of Boston, wrote the Phase 1 report, *Natick Our Community Yesterday and Today*. The consulting term was led by Marc Racicot. [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org).

### Blackerby Associates, Inc.

Blackerby Associates, of Phoenix, provided project management and facilitation services during the *Natick 360* strategic planning process. The consulting team was led by Phillip Blackerby, Elizabeth Reuthe and Kevin O'Sullivan. [www.BlackerbyAssoc.com](http://www.BlackerbyAssoc.com).

### ETC Institute

ETC Institute, of Olathe, Kansas, conducted the scientific random sample survey of Natick residents. The consulting team was led by Chris Tatham. [www.EtcInstitute.com](http://www.EtcInstitute.com).